

Old Age, Disability, Death

First laws: 1956 (old-age noncontributory pensions) and 1967 (public assistance for disability).

Current law: 1972 (National Insurance Act) amended (1999).

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Exchange rate: U.S. \$1.00 equals 1 Bahamian dollar (B\$).

Coverage

Employed persons, self-employed and voluntarily insured.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 1.7% if weekly insurable wages are under B\$60, 3.4% for others. Self-employed, 8.8% if eligible for work injury program, 6.8% for others.

Employer: 7.1% of payroll if wages under B\$60, 5.4% for others. Out of employer's contribution, 0.75 of payroll is earmarked for work-injury benefits.

Government: None except for means-tested allowances in force prior to October 1974.

Maximum earnings for contribution and benefit purposes: B\$20,800 per year. For civil servants, the maximum is B\$5,720 for retirement and disability purposes.

Above contributions also finance cash sickness, maternity, and work-injury benefits (except for certain categories of self-employed).

Qualifying Conditions

Old-age pension: Age 65, 150 weeks' contributions paid.

Employees over age 35 in 1974 (self-employed over age 35 in 1976) receive special credit of 25 weeks for each year over age 35, up to maximum of 600 weeks, provided contributions were paid for 150 weeks during first 3 years program in operation.

Eligible only if earning less than B\$120 per week.

Payable locally to persons who are abroad.

Disability pension: Under age 65; permanent incapacity for any work. Qualifying conditions same as above.

Survivor pension: Deceased was a pensioner or had made 150 contributions at death. For funeral grant, 50 weeks of contributions.

Old-Age Benefits

Old-age pension: 40% of covered wage with 750 weeks of contributions paid or credited. Increased by 1% of covered wage for every 50 weeks of paid or credited contributions above 750 up to maximum of 60%. 15% to 38% of covered wage if 150-749 weeks of contributions paid or credited.

Minimum benefit: B\$ 43.85 per week.

Means-tested allowance: B\$36.92 per week payable to retired workers age 65 or over who do not qualify under National Insurance Act.

Disability Benefits

Disability pension: 40% of covered wage, according to wage class, with 750 weeks' contributions paid or credited. Increased by 1% of covered wage for every 50 weeks of contributions paid or credited above 750 up to a maximum of 60%. 15% to 38% of covered wage if 150-749 contributions paid or credited.

Minimum benefit: B\$43.85 per week.

Means-tested allowance: B\$36.92 per week.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: 50% of pension of insured, payable to widow aged 40 or over, incapable of gainful employment, or caring for a child eligible for survivor's benefits. Also payable to dependent disabled widower with income less than B\$30 weekly. As of January 1999, widowers entitled to benefits similar to those of widows.

Minimum benefit: B\$43.85 per week.

Orphans: 10% of insured's pension for each dependent child under age 16 (21, if full-time student) up to a family maximum of 100%.

Full orphans receive B\$17.50 a week each, or up to B\$20.50 if over age 12, student, or disabled.

Minimum benefit: B\$17.31.

Dependent mother over age 40 or disabled father with income under B\$30 a week, 50% of pension, provided no other survivor with prior entitlement. Minimum benefit: B\$43.85 a week.

Means-tested allowances: Adults B\$36.92; children, B\$13.85.

Funeral grant: B\$1,500 on death of insured who paid a minimum of 50 contributions to scheme; also paid on death of spouse. Payable to the person paying the funeral expenses. If funeral costs less than B\$1,000, balance payable at the discretion of the National Insurance Board.

Administrative Organization

Prime Minister's Office, general supervision.

National Insurance Board, administration of program.

Sickness and Maternity

First and current law: 1972.

Type of program: Social insurance system. Cash benefits only.

Coverage

Employed persons, including self-employed.

Source of Funds

Insured person: See pension contributions above.

Employer: Same.

Government: None.

Qualifying Conditions

Cash sickness benefits: 40 weeks of paid contributions, and 26 weeks paid or credited in the year before benefit is due or in the last contribution year, or 13 weeks paid or credited in the last 26 weeks.

Cash maternity benefits: 50 weeks of contribution since entry into the system with either:

- 1 26 weeks' contributions paid or credited in the preceding contribution year or
- 2 26 weeks' contributions in the 40 weeks before benefit is due.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Sickness benefit: 60% of average weekly covered earnings.

Payable after 3-day waiting period for up to 26 weeks (may be extended to 40 weeks in certain circumstances).

Minimum benefit: B\$43.85 per week.

Means-tested sickness allowance of B\$36.92 per week for an insured who does not qualify for a sickness benefit.

Maternity benefit: 60% of average weekly covered earnings payable for 13 weeks (may be extended to 15 weeks) commencing from a date not earlier than 6 weeks before confinement. There is also a maternity grant of B\$400 per live birth, effective January 1, 1999, paid to all women who have paid a minimum of 50 contributions to the scheme.

Minimum benefit: B\$43.85 a week.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Medical benefits: None under insurance.

(Medical care available at public hospitals and clinics to public and private patients. Government subsidizes costs for public patients, children, the elderly and indigent persons.)

Dependents' Medical Benefits

Medical benefits for dependents: None under insurance.

Administrative Organization

Prime Minister's Office, general supervision.

National Insurance Board, administration of program.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Medical benefits: Hospitalization, general and specialist care, medicines, and transportation.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: Same as survivors' benefits, above, except that the amount is based on a temporary disability pension instead of the pension of the insured.

Administrative Organization

Prime Minister's Office, general supervision.

National Insurance Board, administration of program.

Work Injury

First law: 1943.

Current law: 1972.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employed persons and certain categories of self-employed.

Exclusions: Family labor.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None, except self-employed (see pension contributions above).

Employer: Entire cost (see pension contributions above).

Government: None.

Qualifying Conditions

Work-injury benefits: No minimum qualifying period.

Temporary Disability Benefits

Temporary disability pension: 66 2/3% of average weekly covered earnings. Payable after a 3-day waiting period for up to 40 weeks.

Minimum benefit: B\$43.85 a week.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension: Same as for temporary disability benefit, if permanent incapacity of 100%; proportionately reduced for partial disability (25% or more).

A lump sum grant, dependent on degree of disability (1% or more) of B\$100-B\$2,400 is also payable.

Minimum benefit: B\$43.85 a week for total disability and B\$36.92 a week for partial disability.